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FOR LTGEN SELVA.

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/22/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: GOI SAYS IT IS READY TO EVACUATE OUTPOSTS

Classified By: DCM Luis G. Moreno, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (C) Since Prime Minister Netanyahu's May 18 meeting with POTUS, the GOI has publicly announced and demonstrated its intent to dismantle illegal West Bank outposts. On May 20, Ha'aretz reported that Minister of Defense Barak told the YESHA settlers council that the GOI was ready to evacuate illegal post-March 2001 outposts. While Barak told YESHA he prefers to reach an agreement with outpost residents for voluntary evacuation, he warned that the IDF would remove these sites by force if necessary. In reaction, YESHA rabbis have instructed soldiers to disobey orders to evacuate by force. Israeli press also reported that the IDF Civil Administration has warned residents of at least 24 outposts that they face eviction in the near future, and has issued 25 "delimiting orders" against 10 outposts. (Note: Delimiting orders are required to evacuate an outpost. End note.) Prime Minister Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Lieberman separately told CODEL Ackerman May 25/26 that the GOI is working on a plan to remove illegal outposts, but both also added that they do not plan to freeze "natural growth" in the settlements.

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Formal Plan to Come, Opposition Likely  
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12. (C/NF) On May 26, an MOD contact confirmed to EconCouns that Minister of Defense Barak and PM Netanyahu agree in principle to dismantle between 22-26 post-March 2001 outposts. He said that the plans for doing so have not yet been completed, so he could not provide any details on a timetable, an outpost priority list, or mechanisms for executing evacuations and preventing resettlement. In fact, he could not commit as to when the plan would be ready to implement, since political and legal consideration could delay implementation. Settler groups have already threatened to take legal action to delay evacuations and are working to mobilize thousands of supporters to block attempts to remove significant outposts. The MOD official also suggested that such groups may also respond to the GOI's recent evacuation efforts by expanding or settling new outposts during the upcoming Jewish holiday (Shavuot), as they have frequently done in the past.

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A Few Evacuations Already Have Occurred  
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13. (U) On May 21 the IDF removed six caravans from the Maoz Esther outpost, which has previously been evacuated three times. Residents began rebuilding the site on the same day and have since completed the majority of reconstruction. In addition, Israeli security forces dismantled two small outposts near Kiryat Arba on the morning of May 27. They

removed one tent filled with supplies from the Federman farm, which had already been evacuated back in November 2008. At the other site, Giv'at 18 (Hill 18), security forces destroyed two huts built by yeshiva students from Kiryat Arba. Within hours, the students were rebuilding the structures.

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Comment  
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14. (C/NF) Comment: It is encouraging that the Nethanyahu government at all levels has verified its intent to develop a comprehensive evacuation plan for illegal outposts. At the same time, the GOI has made clear its hope that doing so will deflect attention from the broader issue of settlement expansion and the GOI's political inability to comply with the Roadmap commitment to freeze settlement activity. The seriousness of Netanyahu's intentions must be judged against the record of past commitments to evacuate illegal outposts. For example, on 23 January 2008, MOD Barak--in his response to the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ)--vowed to evacuate Migron within 6 months. To date, the MOD has failed to reach a resettlement agreement with Migron's residents, and maintains that an evacuation will require another 2-3 years. More alarming, the MOD has sought to relocate Migron's residents to a new neighborhood in the existing settlement of Adam, east of the Separation Barrier--violating its commitment to end settlement expansion. While the issuance of "delimiting orders" by the MOD is also encouraging, we note that six of the ten sites issued delimiting orders last week were issued the same orders in 2006--none of which resulted

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in an evacuation. While we do not want to be dismissive of the GOI's intentions, we should not underestimate the political, legal and bureaucratic obstacles it faces in elaborating and implementing an outpost evacuation plan.

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